

January 18, 2006

Dear House Education Committee,

I would like to speak to you today in regards to the Proposed High School Graduation Requirements. I am representing MAHPERD (the Michigan Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance) and the Birmingham Public Schools Physical Education Department.

I have been really thankful that the State Board of Education has included Health Education and Physical Education in their requirements for high school graduation. This demonstrates the states recognition of the importance of Health Education and Physical Education in our youth.

As President of MAHPERD and the System Wide Department Head of Physical Education for Birmingham Public Schools, I am obviously passionate about the need for quality and quantity physical education in our schools. I believe that students need a well-rounded education to develop both physically, as well as, mentally. In fact, in 2002 the California State Board of Education performed a statewide study that demonstrated how core academic assessments increased as fitness assessments increased. The California, Superintendent, Delaine Eastin, witnessed this phenomenon by saying, "We now have the proof we've been looking for: students achieve best when they are physically fit."

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr02/yr02rel37.asp>

I am sure that we are all aware of the fact that the national obesity rates have doubled in the past thirty years. The state of Michigan has been one of the leaders in these national obesity statistics. Many members of our association, as well as, myself have voiced our opinions and shared tangible statistics to administrators from across the state about the importance of health and physical education.

My recommendation would be that health and physical education be used as a solution for this health and wellness problem. I have come to realize that in order for this to be the solution we need to improve our current state physical education law. Hopefully *increasing* the high school health and physical graduation requirements or *clearly defining the credit distribution*, along with *eliminating the exemption clause* in the law will allow our teachers to make a significant impact of the physical well-being of our students and eventually adults of our state.

If you have any questions, or clarifications, please call me or email me so I can be of assistance to you in any of these matters. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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